Election Restriction

Claims 4 and 9 remain in the application as withdrawn.

Claim Objections

Claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 8 and 16-23 objected to because of the following informalities: In the second amendment to claims 2 and 6, there is no antecedent basis for "said opposing face inclination angle" and it is unclear what is being referred to also, it is unclear what is intended by the side faces being "inclined" with a decreasing width. The examiner suggests that the "inclined" is better described as --at an angle-- and that the width is width be clarified at being in a circumferential dimension. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 2, 3, 5, 6 and 8 are alternatively rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Meredith (US 5,655,936) in view of Taneichi (US 6,007,284) and further in view of Mehlberg (US 5,842,894). Meredith discloses a fastener (16) in combination with an attachment member (18) having a receiving hole (28); the nut includes an attachment part (24) being freely received in the receiving hole and a fitting

part (30) which is deformed outward (Figs. 3-5) for retaining the attachment part within the hole and the nut to the attachment member such that the nut engages the attachment member on a firs side with a bolt being received from an opposite side. The attachment part has a smaller outside diameter than an inside diameter of the receiving hole (column 2, lines 39-42) and a portion of the nut body adjacent the attachment part abuts the attachment member (see Figs. 5 and 6). Meredith does not disclose the nut as a quick connect nut. Taneichi discloses, in the first embodiment, a quick connect nut comprising a hexagonal exterior (8), an inner conical portion (10) including guideposts (14) receiving a plurality of nut segments (16), a stop flange having an aperture (see Fig. 8, not labeled) and, a spring (19) biasing the nut segments. The segments having side faces configured at an angle so that they engage the guides to limit inward movement. At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to make the nut of Meredith a quick connect nut as disclosed in Taneichi in order to quicken the attachment of the nut onto the terminal post in Taneichi. The skilled artisan would find the quicker advantageous since it would speed the assembly of the battery cable to the battery terminal by allowing for the cable connector to be simply pushed onto the terminal. Meredith, even as modified by Taneichi, does not disclose the plurality of fitting pieces. Mehlberg discloses a fastener (1) in combination with an attachment member (8) which are secured together and teaches the equivalence of the securement being provided as a single fitting piece or a plurality of fitting pieces (column 3, line 30-31). At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to replace the single fitting piece of

Meredith with a plurality of fitting pieces in view of the Mehlberg's teaching that a single and plural fitting pieces are recognized equivalents. Once the combination was made, the spring inherently would automatically inhibit loss of tightening power due to an axial shift of the bolt.

Claims 16-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Meredith (US 5,655,936) in view of Taneichi (US 6,007,284) and view of Mehlberg (US 5,842,894) as applied to claims 2 and 6 and further in view of Nalle (US 3,104,493). Modified Meredith does not disclose the fitting pieces being arcuate. Nalle discloses a fastener (13) in combination with an attachment member (14) having a receiving hole (18); the nut includes an attachment part (21) being freely received in the receiving hole and a plurality of fitting pieces (22). The fitting pieces are formed as four circumferentially spaced arcuate members having an arc of approximately 90° and separated by a distance less than the length of the arc. At the time the invention was made it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to form the fitting pieces of modified Meredith in an arcuate shape as disclosed in Nalle in order to increase the area of the fitting pieces and in turn improve the retention of the nut to the attachment member.

Response to Remarks

Applicant's remarks have been considered but, are moot in view of the new grounds of rejection.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Flemming Saether whose telephone number is 571-272-7071. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/Flemming Saether/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3677